

Notice of Allowability**Application No.**

09/603,601

Applicant(s)

MARKS, JAMES D.

Examiner

JEFFREY A. BURKE

Art Unit

2169

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERIT IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to Amendment After Non-Final Rejection filed 3/13/2008.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 8-10, 12-14, 23-35, 51 and 61-68.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
(a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
(b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 9/4/2008
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

/Jeff A Burke/
Examiner, Art Unit 2169

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Thomas Bean on 12/18/2008.

2. With respect to claim 8, amend as follows:

A method implemented on a server for funding at least one interactive network site, the at least one interactive network site hosted by the server, presenting questions submitted by at least one of a plurality of users to at least one of at least two experts, the questions being submitted via at least one client interface, each client interface being identified to the users as a forum on a predetermined subject matter of the forum, at least one forum presenting the at least two experts as experts on the predetermined subject matter of the forum, the method comprising the steps of:

the server receiving a question submitted by one of the plurality of users via the client interface of the at least one forum;

the server routing the submitted question for presentation to one of the at least two experts;

the server presenting the question to the one expert via one of a plurality of personal expert interfaces, each personal expert interface being uniquely associated with one of the at least two experts and in communication with the server;

the server receiving a first command via the personal expert interface of the one expert, the first command including an instruction for the server to route the question to another one of the at least two experts via a personal expert interface of the other expert; and

the server verifying receipt of a third party providing a payment, the third party being associated with a third party product or service, wherein the payment [[is]] directed to fund access to the interactive network site by the one user, the payment being provided by a third party associated with a third party product or service.

3. With respect to claim 9, amend as follows:

The method in accordance with claim 8, ~~wherein further comprising the step of:~~
the third party ~~provides providing~~ an additional benefit for the one user, the additional benefit comprising at least one of a discount on a product, a medical treatment, a drug, an insurance premium, a deductible, or a co-payment contribution.

4. With respect to claim 12, amend as follows:

The method in accordance with claim 8, ~~wherein further comprising the step of:~~
the third party ~~provides~~ ~~providing~~ a benefit in addition to the access-funding payment, the additional benefit concerning a third party product or service and being provided to a fourth party other than the third party, the user, and the expert.

5. With respect to claim 28, amend as follows:

A method implemented on a server for funding at least one interactive network site hosted by ~~[[a]]~~ the server, the at least one interactive network site providing answers to questions presented by a plurality of users, the users communicating with the server via a plurality of client interfaces, each of the client interfaces being identified to the users as a forum on a predetermined subject matter of the forum, the forum enabling users to present questions and to view questions and answers relating to the predetermined subject matter of the forum, the method comprising the steps of:

generating at least two fora by the server on the at least one interactive network site;

receiving a question at the server presented by a user accessing a first forum at one of the at least one interactive network site;

posting the question by the server in a location on the server accessible to at least one expert;

presenting the question by the server to the at least one expert via a personal expert interface of the at least one expert, said interface being unique to the at least one expert and on which the question is displayed for the at least one expert to answer;

receiving at the server a command via the personal expert interface from the at least one expert in response to the question, wherein the command includes an answer responding to the question and an instruction;

wherein the server posts the answer to the first forum accessed by the user to present the question; and the server further posts the answer to the question according to the instruction, wherein the instruction instructs that the answer be posted to at least a second one of the at least two forums at which the question was not presented by the user; [[and]]

displaying a banner advertisement for a third party by the server on a page of at least one client interface accessed by the plurality of users; and

[[providing]] verifying receipt by the server of a payment for the banner advertisement by the third party, wherein an amount of the payment is determined by a monitoring of traffic on the network site by the server.

6. With respect to claim 29, amend as follows:

A method implemented on a server for funding at least one interactive network site hosted by [[a]] the server, the at least one interactive network site providing answers to questions presented by a plurality of users, the users communicating with the server via a plurality of client interfaces, each of the client interfaces being identified

to the users as a forum on a predetermined subject matter of the forum, the forum enabling users to present questions and to view questions and answers relating to the predetermined subject matter of the forum, the method comprising the steps of:

generating at least two fora by the server on the at least one interactive network site;

receiving a question at the server presented by a user accessing a first forum at one of the at least one interactive network site;

posting the question by the server in a location on the server accessible to at least one expert;

presenting the question by the server to the at least one expert via a personal expert interface of the at least one expert, said interface being unique to the at least one expert and on which the question is displayed for the at least one expert to answer;

receiving at the server a command via the personal expert interface from the at least one expert in response to the question, wherein the command includes an answer responding to the question and an instruction; wherein the server posts the answer to the first forum accessed by the user to present the question; and the server further posts the answer to the question according to the instruction, wherein the instruction instructs that the answer be posted to at least a second one of the at least two forums at which the question was not presented by the user; and

~~providing- verifying receipt by the server of~~ a payment by a third party, wherein the third party is a sponsor of at least one of the first forum or the second forum.

7. With respect to claim 35, amend as follows:

A method implemented on a server for funding at least one interactive network sites site hosted by [[a]] the server, the at least one interactive network site providing answers to questions presented by a plurality of users, the users communicating with the server via a plurality of client interfaces, each of the client interfaces being identified to the users as a forum on a predetermined subject matter of the forum, the forum enabling users to present questions and to view questions and answers relating to the predetermined subject matter of the forum, the method comprising the steps of:

the server generating at least two forums in the at least one interactive network site;

the server sending a question presented by a user accessing a first one of the at least two forums to a first expert via a personal expert interface of the first expert, the personal expert interface of the first expert being a web page unique to the first expert on which the question is displayed;

the server receiving a first response to the question from the first expert, the first response including an answer to the question and a first instruction to post the answer to the question;

the server posting the answer to the question to the first forum accessed by the user to present the question; and in response to the first instruction, further posting the answer to the question, according to the first instruction, to a second one of the at least two forums, at which the question was not presented by the user; and

the server verifying receipt of ~~a third party providing~~ a payment by a third party for funding the posting of the response, the third party identified as being associated with at least one of the at least two forums.

8. With respect to claim 62, amend as follows:

The method in accordance with claim 35, ~~wherein further comprising the step of:~~
the third party provides ~~providing~~ a benefit in addition to the funding payment, the additional benefit concerning a third party product or service and being provided to a fourth party other than the third party, the user, and the expert.

Allowable Subject Matter

9. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claim 8 – With respect to claim 8, the functions which forms the basis of the reasons of allowance are as follows: The combination of Douglass and Liles disclose in combination all of the limitations recited in claim 8 except: **The server receiving a first command via the personal expert interface of the one expert, the first command including an instruction for the server to route the question to another one of the at least two experts via a personal expert interface of the other expert.**

a. Claim 28 – With respect to claim 28, the functions which forms the basis of the reasons of allowance are as follows: The combination of Douglass and Liles disclose in combination all of the limitations recited in claim 28 except: receiving at the server a command via the personal expert interface from the at least one expert in response to the question, wherein the command includes an answer responding to the question and an instruction; wherein the server posts the answer to the first forum accessed by the user to present the question; **and the server further posts the answer to the question according to the instruction, wherein the instruction instructs that the answer be posted to at least a second one of the at least two forums at which the question was not presented by the user.**

b. Claim 29 -- With respect to claim 29, the functions which forms the basis of the reasons of allowance are as follows: The combination of Douglass and Liles disclose in combination all of the limitations recited in claim 29 except: receiving at the server a command via the personal expert interface from the at least one expert in response to the question, wherein the command includes an answer responding to the question and an instruction; wherein the server posts the answer to the first forum accessed by the user to present the question; and the server further posts the answer to the question according to the instruction, **wherein the instruction instructs that the answer be posted to at least a**

second one of the at least two forums at which the question was not presented by the user.

c. Claim 35 -- With respect to claim 35 the functions which forms the basis of the reasons of allowance are as follows: The combination of Douglass and Liles disclose in combination all of the limitations recited in claim 35 except: the server posting the answer to the question to the first forum accessed by the user to present the question; and in response to the first instruction, **further posting the answer to the question, according to the first instruction, to a second one of the at least two forums, at which the question was not presented by the user.**

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Response to Arguments

2. In response to the rejection of claims 1-6, applicant has cancelled claims 1-6, rendering moot any rejections or arguments based on the rejection of claims 1-6.

Conclusion

3. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- a. US Patent No. 6,122,632 – Is cited for the functionality of forwarding e-mail communications to a database where they may later be answered by a customer service rep.
- b. US Patent No. 6,938,068 – IS cited for the functionality of an expert ranking service based on questions submitted by a client and answered by an expert. This application is not considered prior art because of the filing date.
- c. US Patent No. 6,526,404 – IS cited for the functionality of providing a method for selecting the recipient of a specific message.
- d. US Patent No. 6,691,159 – IS cited for the functionality of a service that allows users to chat on-line with experts through chat rooms. Experts

and persons are linked via the on-line chat interface, and further links experts and persons by the subject that they are interested in.

e. US Patent No. 7,167,855 – Is cited for the functionality of providing the matching between an expert, who has submitted his credentials, to a client seeking an expert with certain credentials.

f. US Patent No. 7,376,700 – Is cited for the functionality of providing a plurality of concerns from a client to a server, each client being set up with a specific coach, and the coach providing recommendations regarding the concerns of the client.

g. US Publication 2003/0163356 – Is cited because it is the related application to the current application, and has already passed to allowance.

h. US Publication 2006/0111943 — Is cited for the functionality of providing answers to health related questions. For example, this publication relates to providing information from a user to a server which will then retrieve information relevant to the user's health. This application is not considered prior art because of the filing date.

i. US Publication 2008/0108881 – Is cited for the functionality of selecting multiple forums related to different subject matter. Furthermore, it is cited for the functionality of providing information from the first forum to a second user, not associated with the first user. This application is not considered prior art because of the filing date.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JEFFREY A. BURKE whose telephone number is (571)270-3844. The examiner can normally be reached on M-R: 7:30 - 5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Trujillo can be reached on 571-272-3677. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jeff A Burke/
Examiner, Art Unit 2169